

Telephone interview with CAPT Lewis Leavitt Haynes, MC, USN (Ret.), survivor of USS *Indianapolis*. Conducted by Jan K. Herman, Historian, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 5 and 12 June 1995. Site interview, 22 June 1995, Newton, MA. (1912-2001)

I spent the weekend reading Dan Kurzman's book, *Fatal Voyage*, in which your personal story is prominently discussed.

Yes. The most accurate book of the five books that have been written about the *Indianapolis* was by a guy named [Raymond B.] Lech. He wrote a book called *All the Drowned Sailors*. And he didn't interview one single survivor. He got everything he needed under the Freedom of Information Act from the Navy. Yet it is the most accurate account. As time goes, most of our stories get better and better. Kurzman only spent 1 hour with me so you know he got his information the same way.

I got the impression that he spent days with each of the survivors.

He came down to Naples, FL, one night and stayed at the Holiday Inn. He called me and Dick Redmayne, the engineering officer of the ship. Dick has always lived next to me. He had us down to the hotel and when he called me in, I went back into the bar section. He had a tape recorder and I spent an hour talking to him and he said, "Thank you very much," and that was it.

I'd like to start at the very beginning of your career.

I was born and raised in Manistee, MI, a small town on the shore of Lake Michigan. My father was a dentist there and I was a typical high school student. I was interested in scouting and became an Eagle Scout and during summers was a counselor at Girl and Boy Scout Camps. I played football and basketball. I got an athletic scholarship to Kalamazoo College because I held the 440 record for high school in the state. I was there 1 year, got involved with a girl and my mother transferred me to the University of Michigan. I hitch hiked back and forth a couple of weekends and that [relationship] drifted away. My mother was very wise.

Incidentally, I knew Raoul Wallenberg at Michigan. He and I were good buddies.

Please tell me about that.

I met Raoul at the University of Michigan. I was a premed student and Raoul was in architecture school. I lived at a rooming house called Ma Breniser's. She served about 10 of us in the house. Raoul did not live in the house. He lived across the street where he had a very private apartment. But he ate all his meals at Ma Breniser's. We ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner together for 2 years.

He was a very interesting young man. He came from very wealthy parents. His family were bankers in Sweden. He was an artist and loved to paint. Raoul was a good artist and that was the kind of fellow he was. He was not the saint they painted him to be but just a good red-blooded boy. The last year Raoul decided to take a tour of the United States. He also went down into Mexico and hitch hiked back the whole way. He came back riding as a hobo on the train and when he arrived at Ma Breniser's he was the dirtiest, grubbiest Swede you've ever seen in your life. But he was full of himself about his riding on the train and his hitch hiking all the way back during summer vacation.

What year was that?

That was 1933 and 1934.

Did you ever have any philosophical discussions with him?

You had 10 boys sitting around the table for meals and it was the usual subjects discussed. We didn't have any philosophical discussions. We talked about girls and he was very interested in that subject. We talked about football and how we could make our liquor. It was Prohibition in those days. The "Purple Gang" from Detroit would come out and sell alcohol at the corner and we could go down to Walgreen's Drug Store and get a quart bottle half filled with distilled water with wintergreen berries and glycerine in it. All we had to do was get the Purple Gang's alcohol and we would pour it in this bottle, shake it up, and put it in the sun on the window sill to make our gin, which we would take to our football games and parties.

So it was just a normal college kind of relationship.

Yes. Raoul was a normal college boy but one who when he saw something he wanted to do he did it. And I'm sure when he was in the embassy business and he saw a need, he had the guts to do what needed to be done.

Did you ever hear from him after your college days?

No. I never did. I went on to medical school and that was just a phase gone. I was very interested to read about him and I've got his book up there.

What was academic life like at the University of Michigan?

Although I did well in my other required pre-med subjects, I didn't do well in physics. I got a D in physics and they told me I had to take 4 hours of advanced physics and get a B before they would let me into medical school. I took 2 hours of x-ray physics and 2 hours of modern physics and got a B in one and a C in the other. They told me I had to take more physics and get a B. Then I got accepted at Northwestern. I said, "The hell with it. I'll be a physics major before I finish."

While at Michigan, for 2 years I was a research subject for a Dr. Catherine Hanst of the Pharmacology Department. She had received a grant from the Kellogg people to prove that decaffeinated coffee was better to drink. I took a pint of decaf every noon with a capsule which had caffeine as a placebo. Then I had my vital signs taken and did a series of tests. I got 75 cents a day, a lot of money in those days.

So I went to Northwestern Medical School in Chicago. I graduated from there in 1938.

When I arrived at Northwestern I didn't know a soul. They put us in anatomy classes, four to a table, and I got assigned to a table with three girls. I helped them with their dissection.

One day one of them asked me if I would like to come to her house for dinner. So I went and knocked on the door and this 60-year-old man answered the door. It was her husband. I hadn't known that. She was about 23 or 24. He was an anesthesiologist in Chicago and we had a very pleasant evening. He asked me if I was interested in anesthesiology and I told him I was interested in everything. He told me that if I could find time on Saturdays and Sundays he taught a course for nurses and he would be happy to have me join it.

I immediately did and went to his classes and learned anesthesiology. And he got me a job the end of my freshman year at Woodlawn Hospital on the south side of Chicago. And I gave anesthetics through medical school for obstetrical cases at night and for emergencies and took the El [Elevated] into Northwestern on Chicago Avenue every day and back. People on the El got to know me because when I fell asleep they would wake me up at my stop.

The externship helped me get through school financially and it also introduced me to the field of surgery and gave me a tremendous amount of experience.

In my junior year I married the night surgical nurse and when I became a senior, I was one of 2 married men in my class. And I had a child to support.

Northwestern University didn't give you a degree until you successfully completed a 1-year rotating internship. I had an internship at Cook County Hospital that paid 25 dollars a month board and room. I knew I would have serious trouble supporting a wife and child when I saw a notice that the Navy would pay 166 dollars per month to married interns. I immediately applied. There were 400 of us who took a competitive written, oral, and physical exam at Great Lakes Training Station for 23 positions. In those depression days it was very competitive. I had to pass! I was very motivated.

Anyway, I came in number 6 and I was accepted in the Navy. I was ordered to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, VA, as a temporary LTJG for 1 year. There were three other interns like me. I started in July 1938, but before I finished Hitler marched into Poland and the Navy decided our appointments would last longer than 1 year.

Looking back, it was an excellent internship and we did things in those pre-antibiotic days that the present day interns happily miss. Venereal disease was rampant. I remember two wards with triple deck bunks filled with gonorrhea and syphilis patients. Every Wednesday was spent giving bismuth and arsenic in the outpatient dependents clinic.

Those patients with central nervous system syphilis were treated with high fevers. At the start of our internship, we gave malaria to these patients to cause chills and high fever and then treated them with quinine. The last 6 months we got the new fever machines where we ran the temperature up to 106 degrees. The intern's job was to sit with the patient for 5 hours. What a bore!

In those days every naval hospital had a tuberculosis ward, usually isolated for the hospital. We learned to tap chests and to collapse lungs.

I remember the pneumonia ward in the winter where we would have 15 lobar pneumonia patients in oxygen tents and one or two died every 24 hours.

In July of 1939, I was ordered to the outpatient dispensary at the U.S. Naval Base Norfolk. I was there for 5 months and it was a very busy outpatient clinic. We also made house calls and I remember making up to eight calls in an evening.

One day I was ordered to depart at once to Destroyer Division 62 as the doctor had become ill and they were sailing the next day. I dashed home, packed, and went to sea the next day. The division was made up of four destroyers, the *Overton* (DD-239), *Bainbridge* (DD-246), *Sturtivant* (DD-240), and the *Reuben James* (DD-245).

We sailed in 48 hours and went to Key West, FL, for "neutrality patrol." This was in January or February 1940. We would go out on patrol for 7 days and then come into port for 3 or 4 days and then go back on patrol for 7 days. Our orders were to follow any combatant ship or any ship belonging to the nations that were at war in Europe. Once we began following them we were to broadcast our position on 500 kilocycles every 15 minutes. We would pick up German ships coming out of Brazil and other South American nations and follow them. The British knew where all their ships were and when we were broadcasting they would know that we weren't following a British man of war but a German ship. We felt like Judas' goats. We were not happy with this assignment. I remember one German ship sent us a message, "Are you here to protect me." Our skipper replied, "No. We're here only in the interests of American neutrality." We set up pools on the destroyer as to the time the British destroyers would show up

to catch the German ship we were following. And when they did arrive, the Germans abandoned the ship, the *Odenwald*, after scuttling it and got into lifeboats. We saw them taking the Germans on board and resumed our patrol.

What were the feelings of the crew as far as the politics of the time? Was there a feeling of hostility toward the Germans at that point?

There was friendliness toward the British and resentment toward the Germans but I don't recall any great hostility. The hostility really came after the invasion of France in June 1940 and then the stories became to come out. Suddenly we realized that sooner or later we were going to go to war with Germany.

While in Guantanamo Bay we received orders. We joined a newly formed fleet because Germany had defeated France, and some of the French fleet was sympathetic to the Vichy government. An aircraft carrier, a cruiser, and some destroyers came across the Atlantic and went into Martinique. President Roosevelt was very upset that he had these armed combatant forces in the Caribbean and under the Monroe Doctrine asked them to disarm; they wouldn't. So our orders were to prepare for the invasion of Martinique. We had transports with Marines and the most antiquated landing equipment you've ever seen. There were old fashioned landing craft--pre Higgins boats. We would go out from Guantanamo Bay every day and fire at Culebra Island, an island off Cuba, for gunnery practice. And the Marines made practice landings.

When we were tied up in the anchorage and we weren't going out such as on a weekend, they would give the crew liberty. This was of course before Castro. They came around with a launch at 4 o'clock in the morning and took us junior doctors off the ships. They took us either to Culebra or Guantanamo city, or the Red Barn. The Red Barn was a liberty place where they had prostitutes and other entertainment. We examined all the prostitutes. The Cuban police, who dressed like American sailors, brought the prostitutes in and we examined them. If their smear was positive or they had any ulcerations we would tell the Cubans and they would put them in jail. The others they would turn free to do their business. And when liberty was over and the boats were ready to go back to Guantanamo Bay, the Medical Corps had to go down to the landing and do prophylactic treatment on every sailor that went aboard. Some would scream, "Doc, I didn't do anything. You can't do that to me." We had silver nitrate solution irrigation and would irrigate the urethra to prevent them from getting gonorrhea and syphilis. We didn't have penicillin and sulfanilamide in those days and they all had to receive the prophylaxis.

Anyway, to get back on the track, we were prepared to invade Martinique. When we arrived, the Vichy French backed down, took their planes off the carrier, offloaded their ammunition and allowed the United States to put observers ashore. They remained in the harbor until the end of the war. We then went back to Guantanamo Bay and the invasion fleet dispersed. We went back to our neutrality patrol and for a time even patrolled out of Panama. We covered the whole Caribbean.

That was very unneutral of you to be blockading wasn't it?

They called it Roosevelt's private war and he ran that war with the Navy supporting the British.

At first, we only had five officers aboard the *Bainbridge*. The commanding officer, Edward Patrick Crehan, qualified me as an officer of the deck. When I came aboard, he told me that I would have to have other duties besides being a medical officer. So I was the medical officer, supply officer, the wardroom mess treasurer, and I qualified as officer of the deck

underway because he said he didn't have enough officers at that time for the rotation. Until we got more people aboard, I did this. I stood the 4 to 8 watch every morning and the 4 to 8 watch every night on the bridge. During those periods we'd always have general quarters. And so I would be relieved. The Old Man would come up and take over the bridge. He did like to kick the doctor around. But I learned to be quite the seaman after awhile. I could keep position on the convoy and had other skills. But I was very pleased when we got more officers aboard and I was relieved of that duty.

How many corpsmen did you have working for you on the destroyers?

I had one corpsman for each destroyer. In those days the crews were very minimal because it was before we started our buildup for the war. That's why we only had five officers when we first went down in the Caribbean because there just weren't enough people to go around. These old four-piper destroyers were World War I vintage and were very rugged ships to live on. I think they were 365 feet long and about 35 feet wide. They could go like hell. The midships were all engines. The officers and deck crew lived forward and the engineers lived aft.

Were they in a decent state of repair early on?

The ones we were on were pretty fair. We didn't have any breakdowns. They were good rugged ships and I think the 50 we gave to the British did pretty well.

In March of '41 we were ordered from the Caribbean to Argentia, Newfoundland. We went up there without any cold weather clothing. I remember after the first round-trip convoy we took up a collection aboard ship, went ashore in St. Johns, Newfoundland, and bought foul weather clothing. We bought all the sheepskin coats we could find. We called them hot coats. When the men changed watch, they changed the coats. If someone said to me "You can have 4 years in the Pacific under wartime conditions or 6 months in the Atlantic, I'd take the 4 years in the Pacific.

At Argentia we were stationed alongside a tender. We would get orders to proceed and pick up a convoy coming out of Halifax. We would then relieve the Canadian corvette escorting that convoy and take it across to what was called Mid-Ocean Meeting Point. That was right off the tip of Ireland--about 200 miles north of Ireland, halfway to Murmansk. There we turned the convoy over to the British. Then we proceeded to Reykjavik, Iceland, pulled up to the *Heckla*, a British destroyer tender. We would fuel and provision. The American destroyers had good food and the British had good liquor aboard their destroyers, so when we were nested together we freely went back and forth.

You had the best food and they had the best booze.

We had **no** booze. After we fueled and provisioned, we would go out and patrol the Denmark Straits for 5 or 6 days. Then we would come back in to refuel and reprovision again and go out, pick up a convoy of mostly empty ships coming out of Britain at the same spot north of Ireland and take it across until we got off Newfoundland. Then we'd turn the convoy over to the Canadians going into Halifax. Then it was back into Argentia again. I made six convoy trips.

Our orders were to consider any German submarine or plane that came within 50 miles of us as attacking us and we were to retaliate. Every time we picked up a sonar contact on a submarine we made a run on it. When we got down off the coast of Ireland... In those days I grew to hate the Irish because the German planes came off of Ireland. The Irish hated the British

so that they didn't help us either. They let the German submarines come up the coast and use their ports. They let the planes fly over uncontested.

One time when I was on the *Bainbridge*, we were escorting a convoy back. The *Hood* was sunk and the *Bismarck* and the *Prinz Eugen* were going out to raid in the Atlantic. We were in a convoy off the tip of Greenland when we received a dispatch in our convoy that the German goal was to destroy the cryolite mines at Ivigtut, Greenland. We were detached from the convoy and went alone up the coast of Greenland all the way to Ivigtut. We were ordered to proceed northward to Ivigtut and if we sighted anything we were to broadcast immediately. We went to general quarters every time an iceberg showed up on our not very good radar screen and there were many in the ice cap.

During Roosevelt's private war, I made six round trips in the North Atlantic.

Did you say there were five destroyers in your squadron?

No, there were four in a division. As division medical officer, I rode either the *Reuben James*, the *Overton*, or the *Bainbridge*. I rode the *Reuben James* on one convoy to Iceland, and coming back we got into a hurricane, the most terrible storm I've ever been in in my life. The convoy got all broken up and all we did was fight to survive. The *James* had terrible damage. One time we fell off a huge wave and the inclinometer read 54 degrees to port. We landed flat on our side. The gyro binnacle in the forward living compartment tore from the deck and got loose. We had to tie it down. The Old Man, Tex Edwards, told us officers he didn't think we were going to make it.

We also had a lot of injuries. The sick bay that I had was a small closet that I could stand in that had a shelf. We had to fold the bunk back when a man was sleeping in front of it so the crew could line up and come in for sick call. I had all my medicines on shelves. If I wanted to examine one of them, I took him out and laid him down in one of the crewman's bunks and examined him on the bunk. Sometimes it was very rough up forward. Men would complain of seasickness and I had my big bucket right alongside of me. He would say, "Doc, I'm seasick." And I would say, "I am too. Go on back to work." We didn't have the medications in those days we do now. If I had a man who was sick with pneumonia or had come with something, I would have to treat him in his own bunk. I had no sick bay. If I had to do surgery that was done on the wardroom table. During that hurricane on the *Reuben James*, I remember one of the engineers came up out of the engine room and put his hand over the knife edge of the hatch as a wave knocked the hatch down and smashed all his fingers.

The only place a doctor had to work on those old four-pipers was the ward room mess table. We put this patient on the table and I had to have two men hold him down to keep him from sliding off as the ship rolled and pitched. Other men held the instruments and trays. Two men had to hold me while I amputated two of his fingers and sewed them up. Every man who got sick went back to his own bunk. This patient went back to the engineering quarters back aft. For sick call, I had to change his dressings and to get back there I had to take the traveling lizard and run between waves.

Please explain the traveling lizard.

A cable ran from the forward deckhouse to the afterdeck house. There were loops that ran along the cable that came down so you put your hand through. You stood in the shelter of the bridge and watched for the roll of the waves. Then you would run like hell holding on to the loop which slid the length of the cable. If a wave came along, you put your other hand up there

and held on like hell. During this terrible storm the ship was hogging so, that one time the lizard was down around my shoulder and as I ran along it would be way up like this. And you'd run along between waves trying to skip the waves.

Anyway, the *Reuben James* got so badly damaged that when we put into Argentia, the ship was ordered back to Boston to be repaired. We had parted water lines and things like that from the hogging. And something had happened to the boilers. She had to have a new gyro binnacle installed and so forth. I thought this was great because I would have a chance to get back and see my wife and family. But the division commander said no. We were going back out the next day with another convoy and he transferred me over to the USS *Roe* (DD-418).

The *Bainbridge*, *Sturtivant*, *Overton*, and *Roe* took the next convoy and the *James* went back to Boston to be repaired. It was very interesting. Jack Daub, who was a very good friend of mine on the *Bainbridge*, was coming up the gangway of the *Reuben James* to report on board as I was going down. He was going to be executive officer relieving Sam Dealey, who went on to become a famous submariner out in the Pacific. Anyway, that was the last time I saw Jack Daub.

We went out with the convoy and as we were coming back, the *Reuben James*, now fully repaired, was coming out with her convoy. She was torpedoed and sunk on October 31st, 1941 at 5:30 in the morning off Cape Fairwell, Greenland by a German submarine and all officers were killed. I lost a lot of friends.

I was on the destroyers for 19 months. We had gone north in March of '41 and this was October of the same year. We had been on convoy duty all that time.

In November I was riding the *Bainbridge* when it was sent to Boston for overhaul and repair. As we came into Boston Harbor I was very happy except that we got dispatch orders transferring me from the *Bainbridge* to the battleship *New Mexico* (BB-40) which was anchored there in the harbor. I remember going from *Bainbridge* to the *New Mexico* on a whaleboat. It was like going from a dumpy 10th rate hotel to the Waldorf Astoria.

So there you were in Boston Harbor on a floating Waldorf Astoria.

Yes. I thought I was going to go ashore. I had been at sea for 19 months and doctors didn't stay at sea too long. But right away we took off for Portland, ME, for gunnery exercises. On December 7, 1941 we were doing short range gunnery exercises off Casco Bay. We then went into Portland Harbor and waited for our orders. We were ordered to proceed to the Pacific.

We left Casco Bay with one destroyer and were to pick up another destroyer off Nantucket Lightship coming out of Boston. We were running for the first time totally blacked out and the officer of the deck saw what he thought was the destroyer that was supposed to join us coming out near the Nantucket Lightship. But it wasn't. It was the SS *Oregonian*, a cargo ship out of Boston. We hit it dead center going about 20 knots and ground it under. They lost 17 men and our bow was badly damaged. We then went into Norfolk Naval Shipyard for repairs before continuing on through the Panama Canal and up to San Francisco.

We remained tied up at the Embarcadero for 3 months while we trained Navy crews who came aboard. We had them for 2 or 3 weeks. We practiced general quarters and other drills four or five times a day. It was a very hectic period.

Until the Battle of Midway in June, when the *New Mexico* was ordered to sea with two other battleships, four other cruisers, two jeep carriers, and 24 destroyers. We went up halfway between Pearl Harbor and the Aleutians in case the carriers didn't win their war and we were needed to stop the invasion of Midway. But we didn't have to do that.

What kind of medical department did you have on the *New Mexico*?

We had a senior medical officer, a junior medical officer, and myself. There were actually three of us. We had about 20 corpsmen. We had a lovely operating room, lovely facilities. I had a great time on that ship. As a matter of fact, we could do a lot of things. I did so many circumcisions on the *New Mexico* they began to call it the "clipper ship."

After the Midway venture, which we didn't take part in, we went back to San Diego and were treated as heroes even though we had nothing to do with the Battle of Midway. I remember Humphrey Bogart came out in his yacht and picked up all the officers and gave us drinks all the way in.

We left San Diego and went to Pearl Harbor. From there to the Fiji Islands, Espiritu Santo, and we backed up the invasion of Guadalcanal.

Then we returned to Pearl Harbor before going up to Alaska. The fleet medical officer came aboard and asked if there was anything he could do and I said, yes, I would like to go home for awhile. And he said, "Doctor, we all have to do our duty." I told him I knew that but when could I go home. He asked me how long I had been at sea and I told him almost 3 years. He looked at me as if he didn't believe me, but said he'd see what he could do. That night I took my cigar and went out on the fantail and looked down and there was a young lieutenant commander medical officer carrying two bags and looking very confused. He came aboard with orders to relieve me. You never saw a guy get packed so fast in your life.

I was sent to Great Lakes, IL, and I was there for 3 months. I became an expert in doing hernias. In those days--early '43--the Navy was taking anybody who had a hernia and we would repair them. I was doing six of them a day. I got very expert at it.

You became quite a practiced surgeon then?

Oh, yes. I just moved my family from Connecticut and got a place outside the base at Great Lakes. I went in one morning and got orders to McAlester, OK, to the Naval Ammunition Depot. I was there 6 months when I was ordered to join the USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35). I started my trip out to join her in the Pacific and finally caught up with her at Tinian during the invasion of the Marianas. I became the senior medical officer. I had one junior medical officer with me and about 12 corpsmen.

The *Indianapolis* was the Fifth Fleet flagship, ADM [Raymond] Spruance's ship. He was born and raised in Indianapolis and that was his ship. I was aboard the whole time he was aboard. In fact, I had additional duty as Fleet Medical Officer.

What was your rank by this time?

Lieutenant commander. Then the ship took Spruance back to Honolulu and went back to take part in the invasion of Palau. After that we picked up ADM Spruance and his staff and prepared for the invasion of Iwo Jima. We went to Iwo and took part in the original bombardment and left there traveling alone without escort. Then we would travel at 25 to 30 knots. An escort couldn't keep up with us. We joined the fleet for the first strikes on Tokyo and down the coast of Japan for the first strikes on Kyushu.

We returned to Iwo Jima and had lots of problems there with the wounded. We had done a lot of work in Honolulu with all the statistics from the invasions of Kwajalein, Tarawa, etc--types of injuries, number of casualties you could expect, and how long it would take to take care of them. That turned out to be a mistake because when we got to Iwo Jima we didn't see the

types of wounds caused by small arms fire. At Iwo we had wounds caused by mines, heavy mortars, heavy artillery shells, and all those things. So we ended up with horrible wounds.

In the original planning we had four LSTs on the beach which served as triage centers and then we had hospital ships for backup. But the wounds were so terrible that the available medical assets couldn't handle the situation and everything got backed up on the LSTs. Even the hospital ships couldn't handle the casualties. As a result, practically every ship in the bombardment fleet got some of the casualties.

So they brought casualties aboard the *Indianapolis* and you were handling them in your sick bay?

Right.

What kind of a sick bay did you have?

We had a very nice sick bay. I had an operating room and a ward with about 10 or 12 bunks. I had an office, a laboratory, an x-ray department. It was a nice setup.

So you were handling these very seriously injured men.

We didn't keep them long. Whenever we could get rid of them we did. The ships that put the troops ashore could be converted into hospital type ships. When we finished with emergency first aid we sent them to other ships. We weren't going to keep them. It's just that the hospital ships and the two transports could not handle the influx of all the bad wounds. You could look over at the hospital ships and see LSTs circling around and around maybe 20 or 30 in a row trying to come alongside trying to get rid of their patients. So instead of waiting their turn to get them aboard the hospital ships, which might take 2 or 3 hours, we sent them to the combatant ships.

This was mainly for Iwo Jima.

Yes. Anyway, after Iwo Jima we prepared for Okinawa. The *Indianapolis* led the first bombardment. Spruance used the *Indianapolis* like it was a destroyer. He took it everywhere. He was the most brilliant commander and one of the greatest men I ever knew.

You knew him personally?

I walked with him on the fo'c'sle every day. That was one of my jobs. He went out every day and walked on the fo'c'sle deck. I remember one time at Tinian we were getting underway to go out and I was out walking up and down the fo'c'sle deck with the admiral. A cargo ship was coming out and we were on a collision course. We began to toot our horn and the cargo ship was tooting and everybody was putting on their brakes and right ahead of us were other ships that we could collide with. I wanted to run and hide behind the turret. The admiral looked out and calmly said, "She'll pass astern by about 100 feet," and kept on walking. He was a great man. Sometimes he would throw me for a loop. One day he said, "Dr. Haynes, do you believe in the endogenous or exogenous theory of pulmonary tuberculosis?" This was out of a fleet admiral, mind you.

On the first of April off Ie Shima, near Okinawa, a kamikaze hit us. Because of the kamikaze threat, the admiral had sent all the old destroyers, LCIs, and LCTs out on the periphery. And they all had orders to fire on any Japanese plane they saw regardless of the type or whether it was attacking. From breaking the Japanese code, they had information that

kamikaze pilots had orders to dive on the first ship that fired on them. So, some of those destroyers had six or eight kamikazes hitting them. This was the seventh one that had dove on us. I was standing on the deck when one came down and it looked like the fire of the guns was just holding it in the air. It went right down the side of the ship and crashed alongside. There was no place you could hide. There are no foxholes on a ship. When it hit the water it almost exploded. A lot of the men who were looking over the side were hit with little aluminum rivets. I spent most of the afternoon digging rivets out of their hands and faces. But they weren't seriously injured.

Anyway, this last kamikaze dropped two bombs just before he hit us. The bombs went down through the mess hall and exploded going out the bottom of the ship taking off our port screws and destroying our evaporator room.

Did the bomb actually go out the bottom of the ship?

It went out the bottom of the ship and exploded as it went out. It was an armor-piercing bomb. The plane came down into a mess hall full of men eating breakfast. So we had 38 dead and about 40 wounded.

Were you in sick bay at the time or were you topside?

I was eating breakfast. I had put my cup of coffee down on the saucer when the thing hit and I went to take a drink of coffee from my cup because I knew I wasn't going to have anything for hours. The cup was empty. The force of the boom had thrown the coffee out of the cup.

I went back aft and they were starting to close up the stern part of the ship. There was an after living compartment. I went down the ladder into it. There was very rapid flooding. I examined two or three men who were in bunks. The force of the explosion had lifted the deck up and then squashed the three-decker bunks so that the men were compressed in their bunks. They were dead. There were parts of people hanging out. I stumbled over another man in the oil and water and we carried him out, but he too was dead.

From that point on it was back to sick bay taking care of the 40 wounded with Mel [LT Melvin W.] Modisher, my junior medical officer. Mel was a very quiet, hardworking good doctor. We spent the rest of the day taking care of the injured as we slowly limped along.

We crept along because we only had the two screws and were flooded and down by the stern. We went into Kerama Retto, a group of islands a little south of Okinawa which they used as a harbor. All the damaged ships were taken in there. While we were there, the Seabees came alongside and pumped the water out and we dug out our dead and buried them there. We finished taking care of our wounded and put them on a hospital ship that was leaving. And I understand it got hit by a kamikaze.

That was the *Comfort* (AH-6).

I heard later that one of the guys we had worked on had been killed in that attack.

We stayed tied up at Kerama Retto and tried to repair the ship.

One night we had general quarters and they announced over the system that there was a Jap aboard with a knife, whereupon I was called to sick bay. When I got down there I found a marine who had been stabbed. The Jap had swum out to the ship and was going up where we had the boats tied alongside--was going up the ladder, went down the boom, and was climbing over the railing. The marine put his gun down and helped him over. We went to general quarters, searched the ship, and found the Jap hiding up on the fo'c'sle deck where they killed

him. The marine didn't have a severe wound, just a big slashing wound, but the poor guy had a bad time afterwards because he had been helping the Jap aboard. He thought he was one of the guys coming up from the motor whaleboat.

We had no fresh water. Our evaporators were all destroyed. We all got an 8-inch powder can--the containers they had the powder sacks in--and filled them with fresh water. And that was our water. We got underway to go back to San Francisco to get repaired. This was what we had to wash in, to drink. Each man had his own.

How many of these 8-inch cans did you have?

I have no idea. Every man in the crew had one. There was no water to use on the ship except salt water. You could take saltwater showers but that was it.

We got underway to go back to San Francisco to get repaired.

Did you make any stops on the way back?

Yes. We stopped at Guam. We stopped at Pearl. We had to pick up water at each place. And we went very slowly because we only had our starboard screws.

We finally got to Mare Island and, while the ship underwent repairs, everybody went on vacation. In the book [*Fatal Voyage* by Dan Kurzman] it tells about the chaplain giving me money to go home. And that's a true story. When I came back I had enough money to repay him. Father [Thomas M.] Conway was Catholic and the chaplain on the ship. I was a Protestant and he had to conduct both services. I helped him sing the Protestant hymns during our services on the after deck. We were very close. When we were going into Mare Island he asked me what I was going to do and I said, "I don't have enough money to go home to Connecticut and I don't have enough to bring my family out here to put them up. I don't know what I'm going to do yet." A few hours later, he came in and put a big stack of money on my desk, and said, "Now go home." He was a great man. He died in my arms. It's an emotional thing with me, one of many.

Anyway, I went back to Connecticut and saw my family then came back to Mare Island when our repairs were completed. Then we were supposed to go on our post repair trial run. But instead, on July 15th, we were ordered to go to Hunter's Point in San Francisco, where we anchored. Hunter's Point was also a busy naval shipyard. After getting underway, we all went up to the bridge and CAPT [Charles B.] McVay told us we were going to dock at Hunter's Point and take on some cargo.

We went alongside the pier and I was amazed to notice that there was a quiet, almost dead Navy Yard. Two big trucks came alongside. One truck had a bunch of men aboard. They came aboard the ship including two Army officers, CAPT [James F.] Nolan and MAJ [Robert R.] Furman. I found out later the Nolan was a medical officer. I don't know what his job was, probably to monitor radiation.* The other truck contained a big crate which was almost the size of this room which was loaded by crane and put in the port hanger. And I noticed of the men who came aboard, when I filled out their health records, some went to every division on the ship. When we got to Pearl, they all left. Two men carried another container, a canister about 3 feet

*Nolan, a member of the Manhattan Project, was chief physician of the Los Alamos hospital. His specialty had been gynecology and he had some knowledge of x-ray treatment for gynecological cancer. Furman, attached to General Leslie Groves' Washington office, was the general's trusted trouble-shooter. Both Nolan and Furman disguised their mission by wearing field artillery insignia. Furman's and Nolan's job on the *Indianapolis* was to monitor the bomb core's radiation levels with a Geiger counter.

tall and about 2 feet square up to ADM Spruance's cabin where they welded it to the deck. I had that thing welded to the deck above my cabin for the 10 days. Later on, I found out that this was the bomb core and the large box in the hanger contained the device for firing the bomb, bringing the two pieces together to form the critical mass.

We stayed tied up to the pier until after we got this cargo on board. Then we pulled away from the pier and anchored out off Hunter's Point. This was July 16th. What we were really waiting for, I found out later, was for them to explode the bomb at Alamogordo to see if it worked. And after the bomb was exploded at 4 o'clock in the morning, we got dispatch orders to proceed. As we got underway, CAPT McVay called us to the bridge again and he told us we were on a special mission. "I can't tell you what the mission is. I don't know myself but I've been told that every day we take off the trip is a day off the war." Later, MAJ Furman came into my hospital bed on Guam, sat down on the bed and told me about it. He told me that they only had the one bomb of the type "Little Boy" was. The Little Boy type bomb had two portions of uranium at both ends of a tunnel with charges at each end. The fission was created by firing the charges simultaneously and bringing the two halves of the softball together at the center under great force.

CAPT McVay told us that his orders were that if we had an "abandon ship," what was in the admiral's cabin was to be placed in a boat before anybody else. That was our priority. McVay told us this in a staff meeting.

Did you know what the cargo was?

I had no idea. I don't think CAPT McVay knew. We had all kinds of guesses as to what the cargo was. I had additional duty as medical officer on ADM Spruance's staff. The day we left I signed a dispatch as a member of the staff, which went only to the staff. It was addressed to all commanders and said that the *Indianapolis* was under the command of the Commander in Chief. Of course, that was Harry S Truman. The ship was not to be diverted from her mission for any reason whatsoever, which meant that we could sail through a battle and the commander couldn't take us there. From that point on I said, "My God, what have we got that's under the control of the president?" And I talked to CAPT McVay and he talked to us officers. We discussed what it might be and he thought it might have something to do with bacteriological warfare. I don't think he really knew that it was part of the atomic bomb.

Anyway, by the time we hit the Farallon Islands we were making 33 knots. The *Indianapolis* still holds the ship's speed record from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor.

Normally, when you went into Pearl Harbor during the war, you had to take your turn going in. There were ships going in and out of the harbor. The harbor was very busy. As we came around the entrance to go toward the submarine net there were all these ships--carriers and everything else sitting out there not doing anything.

We had a straight run in. The net was open. Normally, there were boats tooting at each other and motor whaleboats and everything going back and forth. That harbor was deserted. We went alongside the dock and I told the executive officer that I wanted to transfer a man who had fractured his leg to the hospital. He said that no one was to leave the ship. I insisted that the man should be in the hospital. He had a fractured ankle which was in a cast. He repeated that nobody was to leave the ship.

We were tied up for 6 hours, refueled and went out. The harbor was still empty and as we went through the gate and left, all the ships that had been waiting as we went in were still

floating out there waiting for their turn. Then I really knew that what we had aboard was awfully important.

After we left Pearl Harbor heading for Tinian, one of the crewmembers, a man named [RdM3 Harold J.] Schechterle, developed acute appendicitis and so Mel Modisher, my junior medical officer and I took his appendix out. Schechterle was one tough boy. I did the appendectomy under regional block because we couldn't get the spinal to work. It was a red hot, acute appendix. When I finished sewing him up, I said to Schechterle, "OK, Schechterle, you can go back to your bunk now." He sat up and said okay and swung his legs over the side of the table and we all laughed and helped him get to his bunk in sick bay. The day before we were sunk he asked to be returned to his own bunk which was a good thing because everyone in sick bay was killed by the explosions. Schechterle abandoned ship, was 4 days and 5 nights in the water and survived.

It was just a straight run to Tinian at as much speed as they could economically go, which I think was about 25 or 26 knots. Everybody was at Condition Able which was 4 hours on, 4 hours off. It was like going into battle the whole way out. The trip from San Francisco to Tinian took a total of 10 days.

When we got to Tinian we went into the harbor and anchored. All these LCIs came out and as they took our special cargo aboard I noticed there were a couple of general officers handling these crates like they were a bunch of stevedores. They were Air Force officers. Then again, I was sure we had something important.

How long did it take to unload all this stuff?

It didn't take long. And after we unloaded it we immediately got underway and headed for Guam. It was at Guam that we got our orders. I thought we were going to go back to Pearl to pick up ADM Spruance. Instead, we were ordered to the Philippines for training exercises preparing for the invasion of Kyushu.

How long were at Guam?

We were at Guam only for 6 or 8 hours, long enough for the captain and some mail to go ashore. We got some mail there. Anyway, CAPT McVay went ashore. It's all documented in those books, that he asked for an escort and was told that we didn't need one. It was safe to go from Guam to the Philippines on "Peddie Route," which was the route we took. What he wasn't told was that there were Japanese submarines along that way and that Naval Intelligence knew it.

What ever happened to the man with the fractured ankle? Was there an opportunity for him to get off at Guam or was it still the same orders that nobody was to leave the ship.

I didn't try to put him off at Guam. He had gotten pretty well adjusted in the 10 days he was hobbling around. I'm sure when the ship sank he went right to the bottom. He was in the sick bay. Most of the men in the sick bay were killed by the explosion.

We were in Guam just a few hours and we left and headed for the Philippines to join a task force there for the training exercises. The first day out of Guam we had general quarters, abandon ship, everything you could name. McVay was trying to whip his crew into shape.

Sunday came and CAPT McVay declared a "rope-yarn Sunday" because we had had 10 days under battle conditions and the crew was exhausted, particularly the engine room. A rope-yarn Sunday meant no duties, no drills. Nobody had any work to do. That is except for the

doctor and his crew who went to the mess hall and gave the entire crew of the *Indianapolis* shots for cholera. The corpsmen and I worked all day giving shots. I think we got finished in the early part of the evening. It was a very unhappy crew because we had ruined their rope-yarn Sunday. But we were going to the tropics and I wanted to be sure the crew had all their shots. When we got torpedoed that night I'm sure we had one sick crew as well because those shots make you feel pretty bad.

The *Indianapolis* was a "Treaty Cruiser." At general quarters I could go from the sick bay to the bridge without opening or closing a watertight door.

What was the significance of being a treaty cruiser and not having watertight integrity?

It was limited to under 10,000 tons and with that tonnage limitation you didn't have to have the same watertight integrity as with the larger ships. You couldn't do it. So that when we were torpedoed.

What do you remember about the night you were torpedoed?

The only time the officers got together was at meal time. That's where we made our friendships and that's when we talked.

[CDR Johns H.] Jack Janney, the navigator, said that Japanese submarines had been spotted along our route and we were going to pass them during the night about midnight. I made a joke. "Our escort will take care of it." And everybody laughed.

How did Janney know about the submarines?

I think he had seen a dispatch when he was on Guam but he hadn't been told by the port director.

But he didn't take it that seriously.

No. We always got these reports all the time.

You were joking around with the rest of your fellow officers?

Yes. About that submarine we were going to encounter. But I was pretty tired because I had given the whole crew cholera shots all day. I remember walking through the warrant officer's quarters. They had a poker game going and asked if I wanted to join in and I said no, I was tired. I then went to bed.

I awoke. I was in the air. My room was lit up with a bright flash of light. I saw the bright light before I felt the concussion of the explosion that threw me up in the air almost to the overhead. The explosion was under my room which was right under Number 2 barbette. I had a lamp on my desk alongside me and it was in the air along with me. I hit the edge of the bunk, hit the deck, stood up and then the second explosion came and knocked me down. As I landed on the deck I thought, "I've got to get the hell out of here!" I grabbed my lifejacket and started to go out the door. There was fire in my room.

My cabin and [LCDR Kenneth I.] Ken Stout's cabins shared a short little passageway the widths of our doors which we stepped into and then took two steps forward into the main passageway. As I started out the door, Ken said, "Let's go." He stepped ahead of me and I stepped into the passageway behind him and I was very close to him when he yelled, "Look out!" and threw his hands up. I lifted the lifejacket in front of my face, and stepped back. As I did, a

wall of fire went "Whoosh!" It burned my hair off, burned my face, and the back of my hands. That's the last I saw of Ken.

I started out trying to go to the forward ladder and as I started to run forward. Right in front of the dentist's room a lot of fire was coming up through the deck. The explosion had to find its way out and it went down through the various passageways in a big ball of fire. That's when I knew I couldn't go forward and turned and started to go aft. As I did, I slipped and fell, landing on my hands. I got third degree burns on my hands--my palms and all the tips of my fingers. I still have the scars. I was barefooted and the soles of my feet were burned off.

I got out to try to go forward to go up on the fo'c'sle deck and the deck was afire forward. Evidently the deck was ruptured.

The next escape route, was through the barbette, which was the 8-inch gun right outside my cabin. I looked in through the door and saw fire all around those shells.

Then I turned aft to go back through the wardroom. I was just two doors from the wardroom. I would have to go through the wardroom and then down a long passageway to the quarterdeck but there was a terrible hazy smoke and it had a peculiar odor. I couldn't breathe. I got to the wardroom and got lost. Things were all over the place. I kept bumping into lamps and what not and finally fell into this big easy chair. I felt so comfortable. I knew I was dying but I really didn't care.

Then someone standing over me said, "My God, I'm fainting!" and he fell on me. Evidently that gave me a shot of adrenalin and I stood up and tried to find him but I couldn't. Somebody was yelling, "Open a porthole!" I can remember someone else yelling "Don't light a match!" All the power was out and it was just a red haze.

The ship was beginning to list and I went down to that side of the ship, got up on the transom and felt for a porthole. I found one already open. I thought it had been blown open by the explosion but I found out later that two other guys had gone out through it and had left a rope dangling. When I stood up on that transom and stuck my head out the porthole, it was like putting your head in the deep freeze. I gulped in some air and as I looked down I saw water rushing into the ship beneath me. I thought about going out the porthole into the ocean but could see papers floating around in the water below. So I knew I couldn't go in that way.

Then this thing hit me in the face and I brushed it away. And it hit me again and I grabbed it. It was the rope the other sailors had used that came from a floater net just above. I pulled on it and it was solid so I went through the porthole like you deliver a baby--one arm first and then the other. Holding on to the rope, I turned on my back and gradually worked my way out so I could stand up on the rim of the porthole and just reach the floater net above. I then crawled across the floater net stood up and went back to the port hanger, which was my battle station. There were a lot of casualties back there.

Was there enough light to see anything?

No. It was quite dark. My chief, [CPhM John A.] Schmueck, was there. I think the moon was going in and out because at times I could see quite clearly, other times not.

Was the ship still making headway?

It was still going along at least 10 knots. They couldn't get word to the engine room to turn off the engines. The engineer hadn't gotten word from the bridge so he kept plowing ahead like this. It just filled up like a bucket.

I remember fainting one time trying to take care of a patient who was on a cot. I fell across him and he shoved me off and I stood up again. We were trying to put dressings on people. We were starting to give morphine to people who were badly burned when an officer came up and said, "Doctor, you'd better get life jackets on your patients."

So Schmueck and I went up a ladder to the deck above where there were some life jackets. Gee, it was quiet up there compared to the noise in the hanger. All the men were at their guns.

There were the 5-inch mounts?

Yes. All the men were at their stations at general quarters. We got a whole bunch of life jackets and went back down and started to put them on the patients. I remember I was putting it on a warrant officer. I never used his name because I didn't want his family to know. His skin was hanging in shreds and he was yelling "Don't touch me, don't touch me." I kept telling him we had to get the jacket on. And I was putting the jacket on when the ship lurched right over. And he just slid away from me, he and all the patients and the plane on the catapult all went down in a big, tangling crash to the other side, which was now the low end of the ship. I was standing right alongside the lifeline and I grabbed it and climbed through. And by the time I did, the ship was on its side.

They all disappeared over the side?

They probably all died. The plane came down on top of them, all the rescue gear and everything we had out went down, patients and everything together.

I stood up on the side of the ship and slowly walked down the side. Another kid came and said he didn't have a jacket. I had an extra jacket, I handed it to him, and he put it on. He was ahead of me. He went to jump and he hit something on the side of the ship and fell in the water. I went down and jumped into the water which was just fuel oil.

Was the ship still moving at this point?

The ship was still going forward so when it started to go it went fast. It was 12 minutes from the time we were hit until the ship went down.

You literally walked down the side of the ship, past the boot top and onto bottom paint.

Yes. I was walking on red paint.

Was there enough light to see very well?

There was enough light from the moon that you could see. It kept coming in and out.

As it rolled and you were walking down the side what could you see?

I wasn't alone. It was covered with people climbing down.

Could you see the screws from where you were?

Not then, but when I jumped in the water and grabbed hold of my life jacket and held myself, I didn't want to get sucked down so I kicked my feet to get away. And then the ship rose up like the ceiling there. I thought it was going to come down and crush me. And the ship kept leaning out away from me, the aft end rising up and leaning over as it stood up on its nose. And

as the screws went by, I vaguely remember seeing someone standing on the screws but I can't be sure.

Was there still forward motion?

Yes. The ship was still going forward at probably 3 or 4 knots. When it finally sank, it was over a hundred yards from me. Most of the survivors were strung out for a half a mile or a mile behind the ship.

You said earlier that when you poked your head through the porthole, it felt like a deep freeze. What did the water feel like when you went into it?

I don't remember. Being in the water wasn't an unpleasant experience except that it was black fuel oil and you got it in your nose, and you got it in your eyes. As the ship went up, I thought I would be sucked down with it but it had just the opposite effect. Because the ship went down so fast because of the forward momentum, the air burst out of the compartments and there were explosions of air that turned you end over end and kept blowing us all farther away. I went tumbling ass over teakettle in the fuel oil and water. And the ship was gone. And suddenly it was very quiet.

Did you hear anyone yelling at that point?

No. There were people all around me but nobody was yelling.

At this point, then, everyone was a swimmer.

As the ship rolled, the swimmers all walked down the side like I did. The captain and a lot of the men and perhaps those people on the afterdeck--the gunnery crew that was up there--when the ship rolled, they all fell off on that side. And as it rolled over all the liferafts and all the floater nets went off on that side, opposite to our side. CAPT McVay and 10 men had two liferafts and two floater nets between them. And another group had four or five rafts and floater nets. There were another 145 of them on that side who were thrown into the water with the rafts.

They were the lucky ones. Everything ended up in the water near them and the guys on your side ended up with nothing.

Nothing. And when the ship went down so fast and the air blew out of the compartments like explosions, they went that way and we went this way and never the twain would meet. We never saw them again. When you're in the ocean at sea level and there are big waves you can't see very far.

We started to gather together. We all looked the same, black oil all over--white eyes and red mouths. No personalities at all. You couldn't tell the doctor from the boot seaman. Everyone swallowed fuel oil which made everyone sick. And then everyone began vomiting. And it was in your eyes, it was in your nose. Later, when the sun came up the covering of oil was a help. It kept us from burning. But at that time, I could have hidden but somebody yelled, "Is the doctor there?" And I made myself known. From that point on--and that's probably why I'm here today--I was kept so busy I had to keep going. But without any equipment, from that point on I became a coroner.

The vomiting further dehydrated everyone.

Sure. And this was midnight and most of the men were probably dehydrated to start with because they'd been asleep. A lot of them hadn't had fluid for some time. And they began to get very thirsty. And that was the big problem I had as time went on. Trying to keep them from drinking saltwater.

A lot of the men were without life jackets. The kapok life jacket is designed with a space in the back. Those who had life jackets that were injured, you could put your arm through that space and pull them up on your hip and keep them up out of the water. And the men were very good about doing this. Those with jackets supported men without jackets. They held onto the back of the jacket, put their arms through there and held on floating in tandem.

When daylight came and we began to get ourselves organized into a group and the leaders began to come out, and they knew I was the doctor, I began to find the wounded and we began to find the dead. And when we got to the dead, the only way I could tell they were dead was to put my finger in their eye. If their pupils were dilated and they didn't blink I assumed they were dead. We would then laboriously take off their life jackets and give it to men who didn't have jackets. In the beginning I took off their dogtags and said "The Lord's Prayer" and let them go. Eventually, I got such an armful of dogtags I couldn't hold them any longer. Even today, when I try to say "The Lord's Prayer" or I hear it, I simply lose it.

What happened when the sun came up?

When the sun came up it reflected off the fuel oil and was like a search light in your eyes that you couldn't get away from. And everyone got photophobia. So I had all the men take their clothes off and we tore them into strips and tied them around our eyes to keep the sun out.

When first light came we had between three and four hundred men in our group. I would guess that probably seven or eight hundred men made it out of the ship.

The second night, which was Monday night, we had all the men put their arms through the life jacket of the man in front of him and we made a big mass so we could stay together-- CAPT [Edward L., USMC] Parke and the others swam around the outside and we supported one another. Some of the men could doze off and sleep for a few minutes. We kept the wounded and those who were sickest in the center of the pack and that was my territory. The next day we found a life ring with a long line attached to it floating and I could put one very sick man across it to support him. All the others would grab a hold of the line and it would curl around so they would just curl around the center.

There was a man in the water with you named CDR [Stanley W.] Lipski. Could you tell me about him?

Stan Lipski and I were good friends. He was very badly burned. His hands were burned down to tendons and his face was badly burned by the flash fire. He had burned his eyes so he couldn't see and he had to be supported, held out of the water. All of us in my group ended up with a huge ulcer on our thigh where you supported a man and the waves rubbed your skin away. Stan took a long time to die. That was one message he gave me for his wife. He said he loved her and wanted her to marry again.

Did she?

I don't know but I did tell her. She was a lovely woman; I hope she did.

Your own injuries, the burns you had, the saltwater must have been quite irritating.

It was at first but then the fuel oil acted like a protective covering after you got over the pain of the thing. If I tried to touch or grab something there was pain but most of the time I was comfortable in the saltwater.

You said that because you had no medical equipment or anything you acted as an advisor to the men.

There was nothing I could do but give advice, bury the dead, and save the life jackets, and try to keep the men from drinking the saltwater when we drifted out of the fuel oil. When the hot sun came out and we were in this crystal-clear water, you were so thirsty you couldn't believe it wasn't good enough to drink. I had a hard time convincing the men that they shouldn't drink. The real young ones--you take away their hope, you take away their water and food, they would drink and then would go fast. I can remember striking men who were drinking water to try and stop them. The saltwater acted like a physic. The men would get diarrhea, then get more dehydrated, then become very maniacal. In the beginning, we tried to hold them and support them while they were thrashing around. And then we discovered we were losing a good man to get rid of one who had been bad and drank. As terrible as it may sound, towards the end when they did this, we shoved them away from the pack because we had to.

Wasn't hypothermia another problem?

The water in that part of the Pacific was warm and good for swimming. But body temperature is over 98 and when you immerse someone up to their chin in that water for a couple of days, you're going to chill him down. So at night with everybody tied together we would take the strings from the leg part of our jackets which normally kept the jacket from riding up, and we would tie it to the man next. Everybody was tied together and they all had severe chills. And after they were chilled, they ran a fever and then they all became delirious. On Tuesday night, in my group, some guy began yelling, "There's a Jap here and he's trying to kill me." And then everybody started to fight. They were totally out of their minds. A lot of men were killed that night. A lot of men drowned. We untied ourselves from the man next and shoved him away and everybody scattered in all directions. And when we got back together the next day there were a hell of a lot fewer. But you couldn't blame the men. They weren't attacking their buddies. They were fighting Japs. It was mass hysteria. You became wary of everyone. It was a beautiful moonlit night and we were drifting in these big seas. You'd see somebody and back off, and they'd back off. Till daylight came, you weren't sure.

In fact, there were mass hallucinations. It was amazing how everyone would see the same thing. One would see something, then someone else would see it. One day everyone got in a long line. I said, "What are you doing?" "Someone answered, "Doctor, there's an island up here just ahead of us. One of us can go ashore at a time and you can get 15 minutes sleep." They all saw the island. They also saw the ship just beneath the surface, and the scuttlebutt [water fountain] down there. And they would dive down to get a drink of water and the salt water killed them. They could see it. You couldn't convince them. Even I thought I saw the ship once. I fought hallucinations off and on. Something always brought me back.

There was an incident when one of the men began hitting you.

I thought someone was splashing water in my face and I got very angry with him and told him to stop. It was a hallucination. What actually was happening was that the water was splashing in my face from breaking waves. It wasn't always calm.

Can you talk about Father Conway? You mentioned earlier how he had selflessly loaned you the money so you could go home to Connecticut.

Father Conway was a big help. He took part in burying the dead and he gave a lot of solace. He like CAPT Parke and all the rest totally exhausted themselves. He finally died. Rich? was supporting Father Conway and he called me and said he couldn't hold him any more. And I took over holding the father. He was delirious and out of his head. He was blessing me and hitting me on the forehead and chest. We tried to hold him and eventually he went into a coma and we let him go.

You were in the water for 4 1/2 days without water or food. In some of the books I've read, they talk of these casks of water that floated by. What was the story on that?

Those were the raft people. We had nothing. I think I saw one potato float by once. There was nothing to eat or drink for 4 1/2 days.

One of the most horrifying aspects of the *Indianapolis* disaster was the fact that sharks were a constant menace. Did you have any encounters with them?

I saw one shark. He was about this long and he went around in front of me in the afternoon. I remember reaching out trying to grab a hold of him. I thought maybe it would be food. However, when night came, things would bang against you in the dark or brush against your leg and you would wonder what it was. But honestly, in the entire 110 hours I was in the water I did not see a man attacked by a shark. However, the destroyers that picked up the bodies afterward found a large number of those bodies--in the report I read--56 bodies were all mutilated by fish. Maybe the sharks were satisfied with the dead; they didn't have to bite the living.

Did you ever see planes?

I think we saw five or six planes. You know it's very hard to see people in the water. And they weren't looking. We all splashed. The first plane that went over, I remember CAPT Parke having everyone splash their feet but they never saw us.

After you ended up in the water, was there any discussion among you about rescue. Was that a subject of conversation?

Not until the next day when we were all together in a group. We had a radioman in the group and he said that a message had been sent. Evidently he had sent a message but it hadn't left the ship or at least nobody every got it. There was never a steady stream of planes, two would go over and then there would be a day without anything. And they were all high up; none of them were low until the plane that found us.

I recall from the books that there were a lot of unkind remarks the men about aviators.

Yes. But after LT [LTJG Wilbur C.] Gwinn found us and [LT Robert A.] Marks came they were very fond of aviators.

What day was that?

That was Thursday. By then we were in pretty bad shape. By then we were in very bad shape. The kapok lifejacket becomes waterlogged. It's good for about 48 hours. We were sunk down to about the level of your shoulders in the water and you had to think about keeping your face and head out of water. And I knew we didn't have very long to go. The men were semi-comatose. We were all on the verge of dying when suddenly this plane flew over. I'm here today because someone on Gwinn's plane had a sore neck. He went to fix the aerial and got a stiff neck and went and lay down in the blister underneath and while he was rubbing his neck thought he saw an oil slick and something in the water. He told Gwinn, the pilot, that he had seen an oil slick and what looked like people in the water. So Gwinn went back and, thinking it was a submarine, opened his bomb bay doors. When he kept going and disappeared, I thought that was it, that was it.

What was the men's reaction?

None. None. When you're in a long period of suffering, and I've seen this in patients since, this becomes your way of life. We weren't too excited about it. And then he began to drop things and our main thought was water. He dropped lifejackets with canisters of water but they ruptured. So we went back to what we were doing. Then LT Marks showed up with his PBY and he dropped rubber life rafts, which we tried very hard to inflate.

I recall that they also dropped a still for making fresh water.

We put the sickest people aboard and the others hung around the side. I found a flask of water and it had a 1-ounce cup with it. I doled out the water, passing the cup down hand to hand. Not one man cheated. And I know how thirsty they were. Not one cheated. It was very hot and the sun was beating down. We had to take off our kapok jackets to get in the raft. It was so hot we went back over the side into the water where we belonged anyway. Towards the end of the day, just before dark, I found a kit for making fresh water out of salt water. I tried to read the instructions and they didn't make any sense. I tried to make it and we tasted it. It still tasted like saltwater to me and I didn't want to take a chance I just threw it into the ocean and then went to pieces.

Did you see Marks land his PBY?

Yes. I watched him circle and suddenly he made an open-sea landing. This took an awful lot of guts. He came in with that big plane and hit those big swells, went back in the air and splashed down again. I thought he'd crashed but he came taxiing back. I found out later he was taxiing around picking up the singles who were floating. If he hadn't done this, I don't think we would have survived. But he stayed on the water during the night, revved up his engines, and turned his searchlight up into the sky so the *Cecil Doyle* (DE-368) could find us. The Doyle aimed its searchlight into the sky in return. And the ship was able to come right to the scene and begin picking us up. At that point we were right at the end.

How soon after Marks landed in the water were you picked up?

Marks landed in the morning about 4 in the afternoon and I was picked up at 4 o'clock the next morning.

Could you describe the rescue?

The *Doyle* came up and we were in the rafts. They had a big net down over the side. Some of the sailors came down the side of the netting and pulled our rafts up alongside. With this big ship hovering over us, I remember one of the men in the raft alongside of me yelled up at the ship, "Have you got any water on board?" Somebody up on the fo'c'sle deck said, "Yes. We've got all the water on board you can drink." And he yelled back, "If you ain't got no water go away and leave us alone."

Anyway, they put a rope around me; we were too weak to climb up. And they hauled me up. I remember bouncing off the side of the ship till they got me up on the deck. When they tried to grab hold of me I remember saying, "I can get up!" But I couldn't. Two sailors grabbed me under my arms and dragged me down the passageway. By the wardroom pantry, someone gave me a glass of water with a mark on it and would only give me so much water. I drank it and when I asked for more, he said that was all I could have this time. As I was drinking, [LCDR] Graham Claytor** came and asked me what ship I was from. And I told him we were what was left of the *Indianapolis*. Much of that time is all a haze to me.

The next thing I knew, I was sitting in a shower. I remember corpsmen or seamen cleaning off my wounds, trying to wash the oil from me, and putting dressings on my burns. I remember trying to lick the water coming down from the shower. They put me in a bunk and I passed out for about 12 hours and then I woke up and was more alert. I recall the first bowel movement I had after I was picked up. I passed pure fuel oil. The other fellows found the same thing.

The *Cecil Doyle* took us to Peleliu. We were taken ashore and put into hospital bunks. I remember they came in and got our vital statistics; none of us had dogtags. We all had discarded them because they were heavy. And they got our names and next of kin, and photographed all of us in our bunks for identification purposes. They changed our dressings. Some of the men got IVs. They didn't give me one. While there I began to eat a little and get some strength back.

Then after 2 or 3 days there at Peleliu, someone came in and said that I was going to Guam. The next thing I knew, they loaded me on a stretcher and hauled me out. I remember being on an LCI lying on the stretcher trying to keep the sun out of my eyes while waiting my turn to be hoisted on the hospital ship.

The commanding officer of the ship, a friend of mine, was Bart [Bartholomew, Surgeon General of the Navy, 1955-1959] Hogan. Bart came in and said, "I know you don't feel well but you're going to have to go before the Inspector General. I'm going to send a corpsman in and I want you to start at the beginning and dictate everything you can remember about what happened because as time goes on you're going to forget and things are going to change." So I dictated every day off and on for 3 days on the way to Guam. When I'd get tired I'd fall asleep and then I'd wake up and he'd come back.

When we landed, Bart gave me a copy of what I dictated and I took it when I went before the Inspector General's office. I told my story and answered their questions and then I gave them this report unedited and said "Here it is. This is probably as accurate as I can be." And that document is the file at the Inspector General's office. And all the people who wrote books about the *Indianapolis* used it.

How long were you in the hospital on Guam?

**Claytor was skipper of the *Doyle* and later became Secretary of the Navy during the Carter administration.

I was in the hospital for 2 weeks.

What kind of treatment were you receiving for your injuries?

They were changing all our dressings, especially for the ulcers. They had penicillin molds in mason jars in my room and they would place the mold on my ulcers when they changed the dressings. One day they came in and told me they would be evacuating me by plane back to the states because I was a doctor and I had the bad burns on my hands.

Two days later, when the doctor came in to change the dressings, he found the wounds healing and said they had decided to send me to Camp Sam Dealey with my crew.

Where was that?

On Guam. The survivors that had been evacuated to the Philippines you saw getting off the plane in that video. Those on the raft didn't go into the hospital at Peleleu. They went to Camp Sam Dealey. They were in better condition, and when we got better they put us there also.

It was all right. We all got drunk. CAPT McVay came and visited us and told us we were going back on the *Hollandia* and to stick together. We went back and landed in San Diego, where they took us on a parade through the city. People cheered and when we got to the end of the parade, they dumped us by the Navy Yard.

I didn't know where to go. Some of the men who weren't too well were taken to the hospital. I was taken into the medical officer's office in the Navy Yard and was told they had my orders. I was to go to Philadelphia Naval Hospital as an anesthesiologist. Everybody else was going on 30 days survivors leave. I told them I didn't think I was able to do that. I thought I should be able to go home for a few days, at least. The medical officer said, "I agree with you. I'll tell you what. You go on back to Fairfield, CT, and see your family and I'll notify the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery that I told you to do that. If they want to go get you, they will go get you." I asked him if I would be on 30 days survivors leave. He said, "Unless they contact you, yes."

So, I went home for 30 days and then reported into the hospital at Philadelphia. The chief of surgery there was Waltman Walters and assistant chief of surgery was Gus Lindscog. I told them I had anesthesiology in my Navy record and I didn't want to be an anesthesiologist. I had put myself through medical school giving anesthetics. I told them I wanted to be a surgeon. Dr. Walters then said that I was now a surgical resident. They didn't inform the Bureau. As far as the Bureau knew, I was giving anesthetics.

I started my surgical residency there and was there for 4 years. Bob [Robert B. Brown, Surgeon General of the Navy 1965-69] came and relieved Walters as chief of surgery. Bob and I became close and I was his boy for the 4 years I was there.

What role did you play in having to testify at CAPT McVay's court martial?

Shortly after arriving at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, I received orders to go to the Inspector General's office, which I did. I was in Washington about 10 days. I answered all their questions and that's when I gave them a copy of that report. I went back to Philadelphia, and then got orders to testify at CAPT McVay's court martial.

How did you hear about the court martial?

It was in all the papers.

What was your reaction?

None of us felt McVay should have a court martial. I don't know of a single man on the ship who thought he should be court martialled. When I was in Fairfield, CT, with my family, about eight or nine next-of-kin of victims came to talk to me. One man was very bitter about the Navy. His son had died. He said he was going to get McVay and he was going to get the Navy.

Was he the banker?

Yes. From Wall Street. Anyway, the man was very bitter. I kind of resented him doing it. I think the Navy court martialled McVay to get the information out.

When I went down there the prosecuting officer got me in a room and told me all the questions they were going to ask me and how I was to reply. This was about the atomic bomb and a lot of other things.

These were questions that would be damaging to McVay?

No. He was asking questions that made it obvious to me that all they were trying to do was to get the information out about the atomic bomb and the ship. And that it was delivered, that it was on Tinian, that we had no parts of the atomic bomb on board anymore, that no one on board was injured by the atomic bomb, all this stuff.

So the questioning was unrelated to the sinking.

Entirely unrelated to the sinking and the court martial.

But you were present at the court martial.

Oh, yes. I was present.

What your recollections of that? You said that you had some connection with [CDR Mochitsura] Hashimoto there.

Well, I wasn't in the courtroom while everyone testified. We sat in a room on the side as witnesses until we were called. And Hashimoto was in the room with us.

Didn't you think Hashimoto's presence at the court martial was a bit peculiar?

Yes, we all did.

After all, he was the guy who had sunk your ship.

He obviously was one scared Jap. You could tell just looking at him. He was scared to death. He thought we were going to shoot him, I think. I felt sorry for him.

Did you have any conversation with him?

No. He was over on the side with two Marines with him all the time.

Didn't you ask yourself why they had this man there? What could he possibly be adding to the proceedings?

I know, and not only that but everybody I've ever talked to wondered why they brought him. Give Hashimoto his due. They asked him if CAPT McVay had been zigzagging, would have it made any difference? And he said no. It wouldn't have made any difference at all. All

he would have done was to change course a little bit. And they asked several submarine skippers they brought in the same thing. They also said that zigzagging didn't make any difference.

Not one of the shining moments in Navy history.

As I told you, I had FADM Chester A. Nimitz for a patient in the Chelsea Naval Hospital.

When was that?

Sometime in the late 50s--'55 or '56. I remember when I walked in to see him for the first time he kind of laughed and said, "I suppose you're going to blame me for not picking you guys up?" I said, "No Admiral, I have no animosity against you at all. You had a lot on your minds with the dropping of the bomb, and it wasn't your fault that they didn't look for us." Then I said, "I was sorry that CAPT McVay got court martialed. And he said, "I never wanted CAPT McVay to be court martialed." Now he was Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet area. There was only one man senior to him.

King.

Yes. [ADM Ernest J.] King.

After all this was over, did you ever see CAPT McVay again?

Yes. I went to the reunion he went to in '61, I think it was. I gave a speech at that reunion. I didn't talk about the *Indianapolis*; I talked about modern medicine, all the things the Navy was doing.

Have there been any long-term effects from the experience such as nightmares?

Normally, I don't have the nightmares. Last night, I didn't sleep well. And I won't sleep well tonite. But eventually my mind will turn off and I'll be all right. It's like when I try to say "The Lord's Prayer" I cry, or I sit down and try to talk to somebody about it. As long as I stay away from talking about individuals--my friends... I was on that ship over a year and a half and we were all close friends and we'd been through a lot together and I knew their wives and their families. As a doctor you get more intimate than normal. But in general this event has been in the center of my life. Look at all those books! I see it on TV.

They don't let you forget it. People like me keep coming back into your life.

People like you keep coming back, but you're Navy so you can come back.